

Federal Business Opportunities

Doing Business With the Federal Government

Information gateway, prepared by the Congressional Research Service for Members of Congress, provides guidance and online procurement procedures for doing business with the federal government.

Getting Started

Learning how to sell successfully to the U.S. government, the world's largest buyer of goods and services, can be a daunting task. Most of the process is conducted online and using a computer is essential. Here are suggested approaches:

Update your company's business plan, highlighting special products, skills and expertise that would be of interest to government agencies. Review your company's marketing strategy and goals. Learn federal procurement processes and terms.

Small Business Administration(SBA) Provides a step-by-step guide for selling to the government, with tips on bidding, marketing, and competing for government contracts, and links to free online courses.

General Services Administration (GSA) As the government's chief acquisitions agency, GSA spends billions of dollars annually on products and services offered to all federal agencies.

Doing Business with GSA Covers government procedures, marketing strategies, and bidding procedures for contracts. Also lists important contacts, such as the 11 GSA regional centers and technical advisors for small businesses.

Office of Small Business Utilization Through outreach activities in regional offices, promotes increased access to GSA's nationwide procurement opportunities for small, minority, veteran, HUBZone, and women business owners.

Using GSA: How to Sell to the Government Describes how GSA buys from small and large businesses, including an explanation of how GSA advertises business opportunities locally and nationally, and lists a calendar of local workshops for businesses wanting to sell to the government.

GSA Training Programs Online and onsite courses, including How to Be a Contractor

Contact Offices in your state or region

Speak with a procurement specialist or contracting officer about federal government buying procedures.

Ask questions about application procedures, technical requirements, and marketing suggestions.

Attend procurement programs, which provide opportunities for business people to meet directly with government officials and to learn from other companies involved in federal contracting.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) Located in every state, these centers advise and train businesses in financial matters, including certification procedures for small and minority businesses. They are an excellent first stop for any business, especially those with little or no previous experience in dealing with federal procurement.

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC) Although the main focus is providing technical assistance on selling to the military, the centers cover marketing to all government agencies through counseling, training, and procurement programs.

GSA Regional offices The contracting officers are familiar with the procurement needs of the federal facilities located in their region.

Register your business online with Central Contractor Registration (CCR)

A company must have a CCR number to get government contracts.

Also review the information on the Criteria for Small Business Classification.

If your business is classified as a small or disadvantaged business, this certification may lead to more business opportunities.

Additional statistical information for business registrations, required for many government forms:

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) The NAICS numeric codes identify products or services for more than 1,000 industries. and is used by the government for statistical purposes.

Federal Supply Classification Groups and Classes [Download a free PDF reader Commodity codes used to classify products and services purchased by the military and many civilian agencies.

Check federal department and agency websites for specialized services or products that may be needed: to locate, use the FirstGov A-Z Index.

Federal Business Opportunities

FedBizOpps (Federal Business Opportunities) Single point of entry for announcements of federal contract opportunities over \$25,000, both civilian and military agencies.

Serves both federal agencies as buyers and businesses as vendors to the government.
For help navigating the website, call the toll-free helpline number (877) 472-3779.

For vendors:

Search FedBizOpps for agency announcements, awards of contracts, and requests for proposals.
Review the Vendors Guide for tips on searching by agency, classification codes, or award categories. [Download a free PDF reader]
Sign up for e-mail notification of announcements of particular agencies or for particular products or services.

For continuing business, apply to become a GSA Schedules contractor.

Under the GSA Schedules program, also referred to as Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) and Federal Supply Schedules (FSS), GSA establishes long-term government-wide contracts with commercial firms. The GSA application and approval process "to get on the Schedule" may take considerable time but may be worth it for future business with government agencies.

Getting on Schedule

Part of the GSA Schedules Program, the Federal Supply Schedule gives many businesses, small and large, further opportunities for multiple awards.

GSA Training Programs

FSS Center for Acquisitions Excellence offers online training and classroom instruction on the GSA Schedules Program. Check for GSA course listings on how to sell to the government and get contract awards, including the course How to be a Contractor.

Subcontracting Opportunities

A federal contract may be so large that a single company might have difficulty in providing the products or services required to meet the terms of the contract. A prime contractor may need to use subcontractors to complete contractual obligations.

SUB-Net (SBA Subcontracting Network)

Identify subcontract opportunities by reviewing the postings of prime contractors.

Subcontracting Opportunities Directory (SBA)

Identify prime contractors through a listing of contractors, with addresses and phone numbers, by state.

Selling to the Military and Department of Defense

Many of the DOD contract announcements and registration requirements for businesses have been incorporated into FedBizOpps (Federal Business Opportunities), with registration at Central Contractor Registration (CCR). However, there are often special requirements for selling to the military. The vast majority of DOD contracts are awarded by DOD field organizations, or specific mission-oriented agencies within an organization.

Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (SADBU)

DOD provides information, publications, and programs to assist small, disadvantaged, or minority businesses to compete for DOD contracts. This site offers a succinct, practical Guide to DOD Contracting Opportunities.

Defense Logistics Agency

Provides links to government websites with information for small businesses wanting to sell to the military. Also there is a link to the listings of local Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, which provide information and counseling to business wanting to sell to the government.